



Commonwealth of Kentucky Personnel Cabinet

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Kentucky's largest health plan receives national recognition for diabetes prevention

FRANKFORT, Ky. (Oct. 31, 2016) - Marilyn McIntyre learned that her health plan was offering a diabetes prevention program at no cost to members, so she signed up and began attending classes in May, 2015. By the end of the program, she had more than doubled her weight loss goal and reduced her A1C levels from the "prediabetic" range (at 6.1) to the "normal" range (5.4).

McIntyre is a member of the Kentucky Employees' Health Plan (KEHP), which provides insurance to more than 260,000 government employees and retirees. KEHP was one of the first in the nation to provide the National Diabetes Prevention Program (DPP) free of charge to its members. Now, in only its second full year of implementation, results have proven significant, and organizations across the country are looking to Kentucky as a model for similar programs.

In just over two years, 103 DPP classes have served nearly 600 KEHP members across 71 counties. Participants have lost more than 5,000 pounds, and have lowered their A1C from an average of 6.0 to 5.58 (normal A1C is considered below 5.7).

Joanna Craver DiBenedetto, Director of Prevention with the American Association of Diabetes Educators (AADE) confirmed Kentucky was one of the first states to

open AADE DPP program sites for participants. "Thanks to the state's support and focused efforts in scaling and sustaining the National DPP, and the fact that the DPP is a covered benefit for Kentucky state employees, it's now home to the largest state network of AADE DPP sites," she said. "Through joint efforts, these programs continue to grow and thrive and we look forward to serving more covered KEHP members at our local, community based programs in the years to come."

The DPP includes 16 weekly sessions with at least six monthly follow-up sessions led by trained lifestyle coaches who guide participants in making long-term lifestyle changes, including monitoring daily food intake, increasing physical activity, reducing stress and using coping skills to maintain weight loss.

"The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan is a leader in offering this proven program," said John W. Robitscher, MPH, Chief Executive Officer with the National Association of Chronic Disease Directors (NACDD). "We commend their team's expertise in program operations and we appreciate the opportunity to partner with them in expanding coverage of the DPP throughout the country."

KEHP has contributed to webinars ([part 1](#) and [part 2](#)) hosted by the NACDD, and offered implementation guidance to the NACDD and its partners in formulating a Medicaid Demonstration Project. Other states, including the California Public Employees' Retirement System (CalPERS) have called on Kentucky for guidance. Kentucky will soon be featured in an emerging practices document produced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

Department of Employee Insurance Commissioner Jenny Goins, whose office administers KEHP, presented findings of the DPP earlier this spring to the Kentucky Diabetes Network (KDN), and was recognized for leadership in support for the Diabetes Prevention Program in Kentucky.

KDN President Mechelle Coble said, "The Kentucky Employees' Health Plan's implementation of the DPP as a covered benefit has catapulted the availability of this prevention program, now offered in 71 counties across Kentucky."

"We feel honored to be working with so many different organizations here and throughout the U.S.," said Goins. "We all have one goal in mind, to curb the onset

of Type 2 diabetes, which is such a huge health factor not only among our plan members, but across the country.”

KEHP is the largest self-insured health plan in Kentucky, and more than 85,000 KEHP members are considered at high risk of developing Type 2 diabetes. More than 19,000 have been positively diagnosed. KEHP’s cost data shows that medical expenditures for diabetes are 151 percent higher than that of an average member. KEHP spent more than \$10 million on diabetes-related treatment in 2015.

In addition to the DPP, KEHP began providing a diabetes value benefit for 2016. Members diagnosed with diabetes pay nothing for diabetic supplies, and either reduced or zero co-pays for diabetic medications.

Kentucky ranks 45th in the nation for diabetes, with more than 233,000 adults diagnosed with prediabetes. Without lifestyle changes to improve their health, 15-30 percent of people with prediabetes will develop Type 2 diabetes within five years.

“We have a tremendous opportunity to instigate change,” said Personnel Cabinet Secretary Thomas Stephens. “Our health plan members are taking a bigger interest in their own wellness, and we’re showing that, with the right support, tools, and knowledge, programs like the DPP can make a significant difference.”

The program is already making a difference in peoples’ lives. “By attending class, I was able to interact with others who were struggling with many of my same issues,” McIntyre said. “The camaraderie and the support of our wonderful lifestyle coaches helped me more than achieve my goals. To be able to say that I am no longer prediabetic is the most exciting outcome of the program. I highly recommend it!”

More information

Visit the national [DPP site](#) for information on how to become a participant, coach, benefit provider or partner organization.

KEHP members with questions regarding enrollment may call the customer support line at 1.844.402.KEHP, available Monday-Friday 8 a.m. – 8 p.m. or

visit <https://livingwell.ky.gov/Pages/Diabetes.aspx>.

Additional state health plan information can be found at kehpn.ky.gov. KEHP wellness benefits, including the HumanaVitality program, are at LivingWell.ky.gov.

Visit the Kentucky Diabetes Network website, <http://www.kydiabetes.net/>, for more on Kentucky's Diabetes Prevention Program organizations, community events and patient and provider educational materials.

Visit the American Association of Diabetes Educators DPP website at <https://www.diabeteseducator.org/practice/diabetes-prevention-program>.

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